

Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group (JJSAG)
Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2024
In-Person Meeting (NDACo Conference Room A)
Remote Option via Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

Terry Traynor (Chair)	Camryn Anders	Olivia Revels-Strother
Jayne Davis	Travis Finck	Emily Yanish
Lisa Bjergaard	Caisee Sandusky	Kylie Schultz
Joel Friesz	Cathy Ferderer	MiLinda Turner
Diane Larson	Russ Riehl	Lynn Flieth
Derek Steiner	Dusty Johnson	Jennifer Withers
MiLinda	Camryn	

Members Absent:

Andrew Schneider	Cristie Jacobsen
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Others Present:

Ann Crews Melton	Lisa Jahner	Cory Pedersen
Luke Schaefer	Rich Wardner	Josh Weber
Ethan Evans	Ryan Johnson	Melanie Heitkamp
Sara Eastman	J'Neil Gibson	Leng Akol
Jadyn Chakua	Melvin Sampson	Ali Shahid

Chairman Traynor called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. He had Olivia Revels-Strother, as a new member to the SAG, introduce herself.

Chairman Traynor recognized the loss of Alton Lick, previous DJS Director and incredible advocate for kids.

The minutes of the meeting on 9/23/23 were presented for approval. Senator Larson moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

Representatives from Youthworks provided updates on two programs that were awarded funding by the SAG last Fall. Melanie Heitkamp and Sara Eastman provided an update on the Youth & Family Engagement Center, talking about the conglomerate of prevention and early intervention services being provided. Ryan Johnson and Ethan Evans with Bismarck High School spoke to the collaboration and importance of the services for integrating kids back after an out-of-school suspension. J'Neil Gibson and a number of youth representatives (Leng Akol, Jadyn Chakua, Melvin Sampson, and Ali Shahid) talked about Beyond The Game, a prevention program for youth in the Fargo area. They talked specifically about the skill building, community engagement, educational support and positive relationships through sports. J'Neil provided data on the efficacy of the program and how it addresses disparity issues in Cass County.

Josh Weber with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center provided an update on the Statewide Racial Equity Workgroup that was established in January 2023 based on their analysis of ND's juvenile justice system. He talked about the activities conducted and the final recommendations, including the importance of Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) leaders and providers to guide the development and implementation of policies, training, and funding.

Lisa Bjergaard provided an update on the work of the Commission on Juvenile Justice, talking about two workgroups that were established. The Commission is working collaboratively with the interim Juvenile Justice Committee by forming a workgroup to bring back recommendations related to House Bill 1195, which called for a legislative management study of a separate juvenile delinquency code. That workgroup is being chaired by Travis Finck. The other workgroup is working on implementation of recommendations made to support schools with legislative changes, which is being chaired by Luke Schaefer.

Travis Finck provided an update on the workgroup related to the juvenile delinquency code study. He indicated that the group decided that they did not have enough time in one interim to establish a separate code. Thus, they decided instead to present a bill draft to interim Juvenile Justice Committee that addresses collateral consequences, and where petitions would no longer mention the adult class level of the offense. The group is still working on best practices in dealing with juvenile delinquencies, juvenile competency, and restitution.

Josh Weber provided an update on the work related to juvenile competency. The CSG Justice Center will be presenting best practices to a group that has been working on competency and restoration practices.

Luke Schaefer, chair of the education workgroup, provided an update in that regard. Luke shared data from a recent survey conducted of school administrators on the new statute related to school-based behavior and offenses. The survey was an attempt to figure out barriers to implementation of the statute as well as successes. Luke indicated that the survey showed a lack of restorative justice programming in schools. The Central Region Education Association is contracting with the Consensus Council to establish a Restorative Practices Council. Ann Crews Melton with the Consensus Council provided a presentation on the council and made a request for additional funding for that work.

Chairman Traynor explained that although North Dakota has received its FY2023 Title II award, a budget has not yet been submitted and thus the group will need to determine allocation areas. He indicated that the some items for funding consideration were presented (i.e. support for schools, Restorative Practices Council), and that Josh Weber with the CSG Justice Center will review some additional items for consideration based on the work they have been doing in North Dakota. Josh highlighted the racial equity work, indicating that the best approach is having BIPOC representatives leading the work, and the importance of SAG activity being viewed through a BIPOC lens. He recommended stipends for the BIPOC committee and a contract for BIPOC consultants. He also talked about juvenile competency and restoration services. Lisa Jahner then reviewed a

proposed FY2023 Title II budget with “placeholders” for the various items discussed. There was discussion by the group about certain budget items. Travis motioned that the proposed budget be approved with the understanding that specific line item allocation amounts will change. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

Due to limited time, it was determined that the last two agenda items (FY2024-26 Three Year Plan Development, and Member Updates) would wait until the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.